



DC Child and Family Services Agency

Strengthening the Safety Net for abused and neglected children and troubled families

In the District, the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) has the legal authority to protect child victims, and those at risk, of abuse and neglect. Like public child welfare agencies across the nation, CFSA protects children through four primary functions.

Taking and Investigating Reports: CFSA Child Protective Services is the gateway to the local public child protection system. CPS takes reports of known or suspected abuse and neglect of youngsters up to age



18 in the District 24 hours a day at 202-671-SAFE. When a report indicates a child has suffered abuse or neglect as defined in law, CPS must investigate to determine whether the report is true or false. Investigative social workers look into child abuse and neglect wherever they occur in the District—in private homes, day-care centers, schools, camps, group homes, hospitals, or any other setting.

Working with Families: Child welfare is unique in that serving our primary clients—children—means helping their parents or caretakers. When CFSA identifies child victims of abuse or neglect, trained social workers from CFSA or private organizations under contract to CFSA step in to keep children safe by working with their families.

We connect families to services that will help them overcome long-standing difficulties that endanger their children. More than half our cases involve social workers monitoring the safety and well being of children at home.



Providing Safe Out-of-Home Care: When a family home (or other living environment) presents too much danger, CFSA has the authority to remove children to safe settings. (We must, however, promptly seek agreement with the removal from the District's Family Court.) Often, relatives are willing to take children who cannot be safe at home. CFSA recruits, trains, and licenses foster parents and also licenses, monitors, and maintains contracts with group homes (and other safe places) for children. District residents interested in providing foster care may call 202-671-LOVE for information.



Children develop best within the bonds of a family. For that reason, removal of children from home is usually temporary. The goal is to help parents resolve crises and overcome difficulties so they can protect and nurture their children themselves. However, when parents are unwilling or unable to protect their children, CFSA and

Family Court seek permanence for children outside their birth homes.

Getting Children Adopted: Too many youngsters are growing up in the nation's child welfare system while waiting for a "forever family." CFSA recruits and trains people willing to provide nurturing, permanent homes for District children and teens through adoption. Most local youngsters hoping to leave the child welfare system for an adoptive home are age 8 or older. Many want to be adopted with their brothers and sisters. The District provides financial and other long-term support for families who adopt through CFSA. People interested in adopting District children may call 202-671-LOVE for information. Legal guardianship is an alternative to adoption for relatives (or others) who want to provide a permanent home for children without legally terminating their parents' rights. j



**For more information about CFSA,
call 202-442-6180.**

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